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Forest
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Route To:

Subject: Potential Insect and Disease Prevention/Suppression Project Areas, Glenwood Ranger District

To: Forest Supervisor, Gila National Forest

On August 10, Dave Conklin of our staff met with Laura Vallejos (Forest Silviculturist) and Alan Beaty (FMO, Glenwood RD) for a brief examination of the West Pueblo Park and Saddle Mountain areas on the Glenwood Ranger District. The District plans to initiate thinning and prescribed burning activities within this large (roughly 20 to 25 thousand acre) area in 2006. The main objective of this meeting was to select some areas for possible treatment under our insect and disease prevention/suppression program.

The group traveled Forest Roads 232 and 209 (the primary access for the area), making several stops and viewing stand conditions en route. An initial stop was made at the Pueblo Park Campground; here the District plans to treat about 60 acres of adjacent ponderosa pine forest to reduce fire hazard. WUI/fuels funding is already available to implement this project, which will involve hand-thinning followed by chipping.

A walk-through was conducted in the West Pueblo Park area, site of an historical cabin. The forest here is mature, uneven-aged ponderosa pine, with oak (several species) and alligator juniper common in the understory. Site quality is good along the bottomlands and gentler slopes, decreasing rather abruptly beyond. The denser, more productive stands here would be a good area for a bark beetle prevention project. Basal areas generally exceed 120 ft²/acre, and stocking is high in the smaller size classes. Western pine beetle has caused scattered tree mortality the past three to five years. Pine dwarf mistletoe is present, but at very low levels. Significant reductions in basal area and stem densities would reduce bark beetle susceptibility, as well as prepare the area for prescribed fire.

The Hinkle Park area was identified as another good candidate for a bark beetle prevention project. Here (along both sides of FR 209) is a dense, more or less even-aged stand of ponderosa pine poles and small sawtimber with very little dwarf mistletoe infection. Basal areas exceed 150 ft² and site quality is good. Effective treatment would reduce basal areas to around 60 to 80 ft². Nearly all excess trees here are 8 to 14" dbh.

Additional pine stands above Hinkle Park (lower portion of FR 209B) could potentially be treated as either bark beetle prevention or dwarf mistletoe suppression projects. Approaching the top of Saddle Mountain, site quality decreases considerably and pine dwarf mistletoe infection becomes extensive. These stands would be very difficult to treat effectively and are probably best deferred from mechanical treatment, although prescribed fire could be beneficial.



Other potential project areas were observed along FR 209 north of Hinkle Park. Several of these stands, which include both pine and mixed-conifer, have never been thinned. In general, we think the best project areas would be overstocked stands on good sites with relatively little dwarf mistletoe infection. Mixed conifer stands with a healthy pine component are often excellent candidates.

Please contact us if you have additional questions or need assistance developing a project proposal. We look forward to working with you to improve forest health in this area.

/s/ David A. Conklin (for)
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